securities", Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius told Seimas on Tuesday.

The diminishing of the reserves was also stipulated by the opposition parties which urged to devalue the litas. According to Slezevicius, Lithuanian people also suffered from these political speculations as they started depositing hard currency instead of the litas on their bank accounts.

The amount of the litas circulating in the market was considerably smaller than the current reserves of gold and currency, thus, the proposals to devalue the litas could be considered as political speculations which had had bad effects on the market of securities, Slezevicius said.

During the first quarter of the year the sell-out of the securities was lower, thus, purchasing the securities that had been sold out last year Government had to allot 37 million litas from the state budget.

"These things had negatively affected budget revenues and covering of the budget deficit as well as programmes funded from the budget" Slezevicius said and ensured that he was taking all measures, including unpopular ones, in order to improve the budget.

<B>GOVERNMENT SET DUTY-FREE IMPORT QUOTAS FOR GRAIN<D>

VILNIUS, April 19, ELTA - Government decided on Wednesday to grant a permission for Agricultural Ministry to set duty-free import quotas for grain and potatoes in order to ensure the supply of flour, bread products and fodder as well as to create favourable conditions for spring sowing.

According to the quotas, it is permitted to import 100 thousand tonnes of wheat for food, the same amount of grain for fodder and three thousand tonnes of seed potatoes.

The grain quotas will be valid until August 1, the potatoe ones - until June 1.

According to heads of Agricultural Ministry, there were no grain for sell in the Lithuanian market at present. Until April 1 of the current year only 160 thousand tonnes wheat for food was purchased by the state. That makes 70 percent of the quota.

60 thousand tonnes of grain for fodder was purchased by the state, that is, 200 thousand tonnes less than from the harvest of 1993. END